

**Congressman Michael McCaul (R-TX)**

Opening Statement

Science Committee field briefing

*“Innovation and Information Technology: The Government, University, and Industry  
Roles in Information Technology Research and Commercialization”*

Good afternoon, and thank you all for being here today for this special meeting of the House Science Committee. I can't tell you how proud I am of Austin this week as the world turns its eyes to my hometown. And I know that Austin is proud to call itself the Technology Capitol of the World, and the home of the University of Texas, which does so much great work in research and development. Therefore, it is fitting that Austin host this year's World Congress on Information Technology. My thanks to all who have made this event possible.

The companies and the leaders of innovation that we see represented here this week are shaping the future of information technology worldwide. We must also realize that this innovation can have a positive impact on our world's developing nations as we use technology to transform our developed world and better the lives of those in need.

As you know, many of the technologies which enabled electronic commerce to become a reality in the 1990s are based on research initially conducted at universities like the University of Texas. Many of those programs were funded by federal agencies, such as the National Science Foundation and DARPA. Substantial and sustained U.S. investments in research and development during the past 50 years provided these breakthroughs which transformed American society and helped the U.S. become the world's dominant economy.

When you use a web browser, send an email or even use the internet, you can thank those thinkers and innovators at American universities who have helped develop these great technologies that made our world smaller.

Today, the technology developed in university labs translates into multi billion dollar industries, with many of the biggest and most profitable IT companies calling the Lone Star State home.

For instance, in 2005, Texas companies exported \$31 billion in computers and electronic products. And the IT industry has been Texas's largest source of exports since 1997.

So you can see how important it is for us to hear from those of you on the front lines of research and development, and from those who take innovations and deliver them to the market place.

While we are here this week at the World Congress on Information Technology working with the world's IT community, we must remember that America is still competing in the global market place.

Nations such as China and India which are relatively new to the IT markets have recognized the importance of innovation to economic growth. They are pouring billions into their scientific and technological infrastructure, rapidly building their innovation capacity and dramatically increasing their ability to compete with U.S. businesses on the world stage.

As our foreign competitors increase their investment in innovation, we too must do the same. That investment does not just mean dollars and cents, it also means building and maintaining a strong and well educated high tech work force.

A company in my district told me that they have an operational need for 90,000 new engineers during the next ten years, but colleges over the entire United States graduate only about 60,000 per year – meaning they will have to export many of those jobs and that is unacceptable.

Improving math and science education for our kids and providing incentives for our college students to pursue degrees and careers in a technical field are equally important to any financial investment America could make in its quest for technological innovation.

In closing, what we will do here today is listen carefully to you - the experts in technology and innovation. We are eager to hear your thoughts on how to improve research and development, and take innovations in the laboratories at places like the University of Texas and bring them to marketplace for America and the world to enjoy and appreciate.

We have a great opportunity here today and I know we all plan to make the most of it.